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Center for the Study of Local Issues
Anne Arundel Community College
101 College Parkway, Arnold MD, 21012-1895
Contact: Dan Nataf 410-777-2733
www2.aacc.edu/csli

Anne Arundel County Survey Finds Residents Evenly Divided on Petition about Slots Referendum

A survey of 640 Anne Arundel County residents conducted March 8-11 by students assisting the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College found the public to be evenly divided about the petition being circulated that would place the County Council's zoning decision on a referendum. When asked whether they supported or opposed the petition effort, residents split evenly with 45 percent each supporting and opposing, 7 percent unsure and 2 percent giving no answer. Removing the unsure and no answer responses produced a 50/50 split.

The survey encompassed a wide range of topics including perceptions of the county, state and national economies, the quality of life in Anne Arundel County and trust in institutions. The methodology for this survey polled a random sample of 640 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted March 8-11, 2010, during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as "Democrats." The dataset was weighted by gender and party to better represent the general population. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

Summary of Findings

A summary of issues covered by the CSLI survey is presented below.

Slots Petition: The survey produced an even split among respondents.

Perceptions of the economy: A range of questions about perceptions of economic conditions and specific experiences relevant to the economy were included. These are examined in the section immediately following the summary of other findings.

Most important problem faced by residents of Anne Arundel County: The economy continued to be the most cited item (36 percent), dwarfing all other items.¹

Right direction/wrong direction: There was no change from last fall in the percentage saying that the county was moving in the right direction (52 percent).

Quality of life in Anne Arundel County: Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) felt that the quality of life was "good" with another 17 percent saying that it was "excellent."

Dealing with the county government deficit for fiscal year 2011: Most respondents (55 percent) said that neither cutting services nor raising taxes alone would be the best approach and instead favored "some of both."

¹ This total includes both those whose responses were coded "economy" as well as those who mentioned "lack of affordable housing" which have been reported together in the past.

State budget cuts: Asked about a variety of measures proposed by Gov. Martin O'Malley to help balance the budget, a majority of respondents (52 percent) disapproved of the decision to raise tuition at the University of Maryland, while a majority (58 percent) also approved a decrease in the overall state budget compared to last year.

O'Malley and budget cuts: Respondents offered a mixed picture of the job the governor has done balancing the state budget, with a plurality (44 percent) saying "okay job."

O'Malley vs. Ehrlich for governor: When asked whether they would vote for O'Malley or Republican Bob Ehrlich for governor if the election were today, a plurality favored Ehrlich (47 percent) over O'Malley (35 percent).

Gansler's ruling on same-sex marriages: A slight plurality (48 vs. 44 percent) favored the Attorney General's ruling that Maryland was obligated to recognize same-sex marriages legally performed in other states.

Constitutional convention for Maryland: Another slight plurality favored holding a constitutional convention to revise the state's constitution (44 vs. 42 percent).

Trust and confidence in various institutions/offices: The highest ranked entities were the Anne Arundel County Fire Department (80 percent saying "great" trust and confidence) and the Anne Arundel County Police (58 percent). The lowest ranked were the U.S. House of Representatives (8 percent), U.S. Senate and "Wall Street financial institutions" (both at 9 percent).

Confidence in moves taken by the federal government: Respondents were split among those saying that they were "very confident" (7 percent) and "somewhat confident" (43 percent) vs. those "not very confident" (49 percent) in federal government moves to deal with the economy.

Most important problem faced by federal government: The economy/jobs, health care, war/defense, political polarization and government budgets/spending were the most important problems cited.

President Obama's job approval: 47 percent approved, unchanged from last fall.

Which party do you trust? There was a change from last fall, when Democrats were more likely to be trusted (37 percent compared to only 33 percent this spring) "to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years" than the Republicans (31percent up from 28 percent) or neither party (31percent up from 27 percent).

Mixed Perceptions of the Economy

Regarding perceptions and experiences related to the economy, the overall picture seemed mixed – with some findings related to the economy signaling improvement, while others showing no change or deterioration.

The survey started with an open-ended question asking "What is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?"

Starting in March 2008, CSLI surveys first indicated an increasing level of concern for the economy, as the percentage citing it as the most important problem nearly tripled from 8 to 23 percent. By March 2009, the stock market was reaching its lowest point and public opinion duly reflected heightening concern as the economy was cited by nearly half (48 percent) of all respondents. Last fall, the percentage citing the economy dropped considerably to 33 percent; this spring it rose slightly to 36 percent.

Another indicator of economic concerns – taxes – dropped slightly to 11 percent, slightly below the 12 percent average for the period from October 2004 to the present.

Table 1: “Most Important Problem facing Residents” – Fall 2004 to Spring 2010²

	Fall '04	Spring '05	Fall '05	Spring '06	Fall '06	Spring '07	Fall '07	Spring '08	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Mean
Economy / lack of affordable housing	8	7	7	15	7	12	8	23	38	48	33	36	20
Taxes – too high	10	13	10	10	9	15	17	16	12	10	12	11	12
Growth / development	14	18	22	16	21	16	16	12	9	5	5	5	13
Education / school problems	12	16	12	13	16	12	12	12	10	8	7	8	12
Traffic congestion / problems	17	9	14	9	12	11	12	7	6	4	5	6	9
Crime / drugs	6	5	6	11	11	9	10	6	4	6	8	6	7
Unsure / no answer	13	11	11	8	7	9	6	9	7	8	10	10	9
Other answer	20	21	18	18	17	16	19	15	14	11	21	17	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	99	100

Note: In this and other tables, totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Since March 2002, the CSLI semi-annual survey has asked a benchmark question about the economy: “How would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County – ‘excellent,’ ‘good,’ ‘only fair’ or ‘poor?’ ”

Since last spring, the question was extended and asked also about the state of Maryland and the country overall.

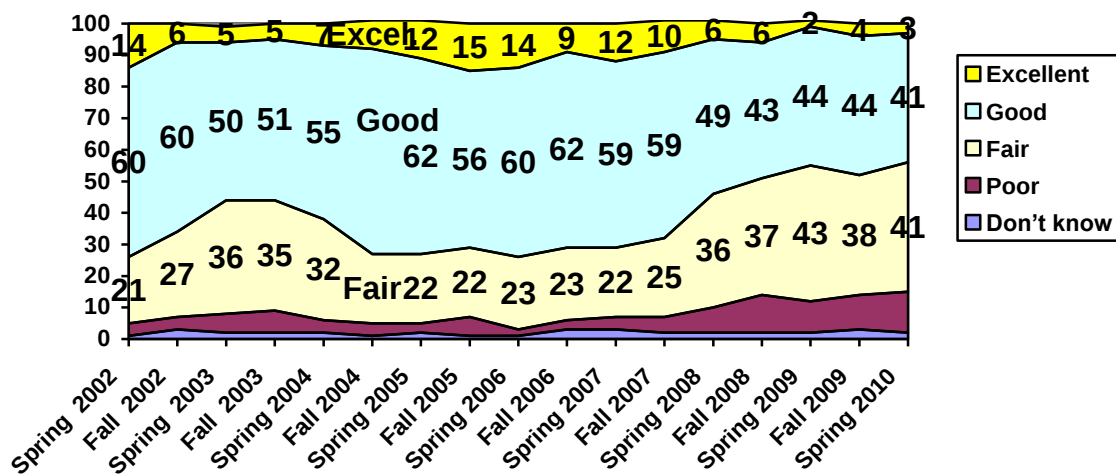
For Anne Arundel County, the historical percentage saying that the economy was a combined “excellent” or “good” has averaged 62 percent. As shown on Table 2 and Graph 1, there was a small decrease (4 percentage points) in the combined score for a total of 44 percent.

² Since spring 2007, surveys’ answer categories for “most important problem” have included “lack of affordable housing” for interviewers to check off. Previously, that answer to the open-ended question would have been categorized under “economy.” The running totals in Table 1 combine both answers into the single “economy” category. Similarly, crime includes those saying “crime” and “illegal drugs.”

Table 2: Perceptions of County Economic Conditions

Condition	Spring 2004	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Mean
Excellent + Good	62	74	74	71	74	71	71	69	55	49	46	48	44	62
Excellent	7	9	12	15	14	9	12	10	6	6	2	4	3	8
Good	55	65	62	56	60	62	59	59	49	43	44	44	41	54
Fair	32	22	22	22	23	23	22	25	36	37	43	38	41	30
Poor	4	4	3	6	2	3	4	5	8	12	10	11	13	7
Don't know	2	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
Total	100	101	101	100	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	100	100	100

**Graph 1: Economic Conditions in Anne Arundel County
Spring 2002-Spring 2010**



Looking at the results for the three jurisdictions on Tables 3.0 through 3.2, there were no notable changes, especially for the state of Maryland. The results for the United States showed a slight improvement as the percentage saying “poor” reached its lowest level in 18 months: 46 percent. As in prior surveys, respondents expressed the greatest optimism about the local economy and the least for the country’s overall economy.

When asked whether economic conditions in Maryland would be better, worse or the same in one year, the public showed mild optimism as 40 percent said “better” with another 40 percent saying “the same.” Only 14 percent thought that Maryland’s economy would be worse.

Table 3.0: Perceptions of County Economy

Condition	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10
Excellent+Good	46	48	44
Excellent	2	4	3
Good	44	44	41
Fair	43	38	41
Poor	10	11	13
Don't know/no answer	2	3	2
Total	101	100	100

Table 3.1: Perceptions of State Economy

Condition	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10
Excellent+Good	27	30	31
Excellent	1	2	2
Good	26	28	29
Fair	49	45	46
Poor	22	21	21
Don't know	2	4	2
Total	100	100	100

Table 3.2: Perceptions of National Economy

Condition	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10
Excellent+Good	5	11	11
Excellent	0	1	1
Good	5	10	10
Fair	30	39	42
Poor	63	48	46
Don't know	1	2	2
Total	99	100	101

With regard to the country's economy, recent Gallup surveys (March 10-12) of national samples produced a positive (excellent plus good) rating of 11 percent and a "poor" score of 48 percent, nearly identical to the CSLI survey results for March 8-11 (11 and 46 percent respectively).³

Nataf said that these results "show that perceptions of the country's economy are nationalized and independent of perceptions of state and local economies. Residents continue to perceive the Anne Arundel County economy to be four times healthier than that of the country overall and share perceptions of Americans nationwide regarding the country's economy."

Since spring 2008, CSLI surveys have included a battery of questions focused on specific aspects of economic distress such as inflation, stock/retirement losses, unemployment, house foreclosure, housing affordability, the cost of transportation, and the like.

Respondents were asked: "Thinking about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household." Table 4 shows the results for the last four CSLI surveys.

³ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/110821/Gallup-Daily-US-Economic-Conditions.aspx>.

Table 4: Economic Conditions Applying to Personal Circumstances

Condition	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Spring '10-Fall 2009
Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	n.a.	71	75	70	56	-14
Hard to afford cost of taxes*	47	58	59	59	63	+4
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	56	59	55	55	56	+1
Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	61	50	53	42	44	+2
Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	n.a.	n.a.	51	46	47	+1
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	35	30	29	33	32	-1
Facing the possibility of unemployment	11	15	24	24	19	-5
Hard to afford cost of transportation	40	32	21	17	21	+4
Unable to find affordable housing	21	11	12	13	15	+2
Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	6	4	6	8	7	-1

* The exact wording of this item changed from spring 2008 to fall 2008, partly accounting for the change in percentages since that time.

Table 4 shows the evolution of the public's responses to this set of questions. While overall not much changed since last fall's survey, there was a clear decline in the percentage of those saying they had experienced "significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts."

This decline is notable as it signaled a lessening of economic duress particularly for those in higher income brackets. As seen in Table 4.1, there is a statistically significant relationship between a respondent's household income and the likelihood that such losses apply to the household. To the extent that there was a diminution in losses, it primarily assisted upper-income groups. By contrast, the 5 point decline in the percentage mentioning unemployment tended to apply disproportionately to lower-income categories: 30 percent of those earning under \$50,000 mentioned unemployment while only 16 percent of those earning over \$100,000 did.

Table 4.1: Income Groups and Percent of those Saying Significant Losses in Stock/Retirement Accounts

Income Group	Percentage Saying "Applies"
0-\$30k	42
\$30-50k	46
\$50-75k	60
\$75-100k	65
\$100-150k	71
Over \$150k	55

Since March 2009, CSLI surveys have asked about residents' confidence in "moves taken by the federal government in response to the financial crisis." As seen on Table 5, there were only small changes, mostly a slight increase in those saying "somewhat confident" (4 percentage point) and an equal drop in those saying "very confident." In general, the percentage saying a combined "very" and "somewhat" confident has hovered around 50 percent.

There was a strong partisan element among those answering this question: while 63 percent of Democrats felt “very” or “somewhat” confident, only 35 percent of Republicans and 43 percent of unaffiliated residents agreed. “This shows the pervasive quality of partisanship as a filter for perceptions of the competency of the federal government,” Nataf said.

Table 5: Confidence in Moves taken by the Federal Government

Level of Confidence	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010
Very confident	5	12	11	7
Somewhat confident	40	40	39	43
Not very confident	53	46	48	49
Unsure	3	2	1	2
No answer	0	0	1	0
Total	101	100	100	101

Other Findings

County – Right or Wrong Direction?

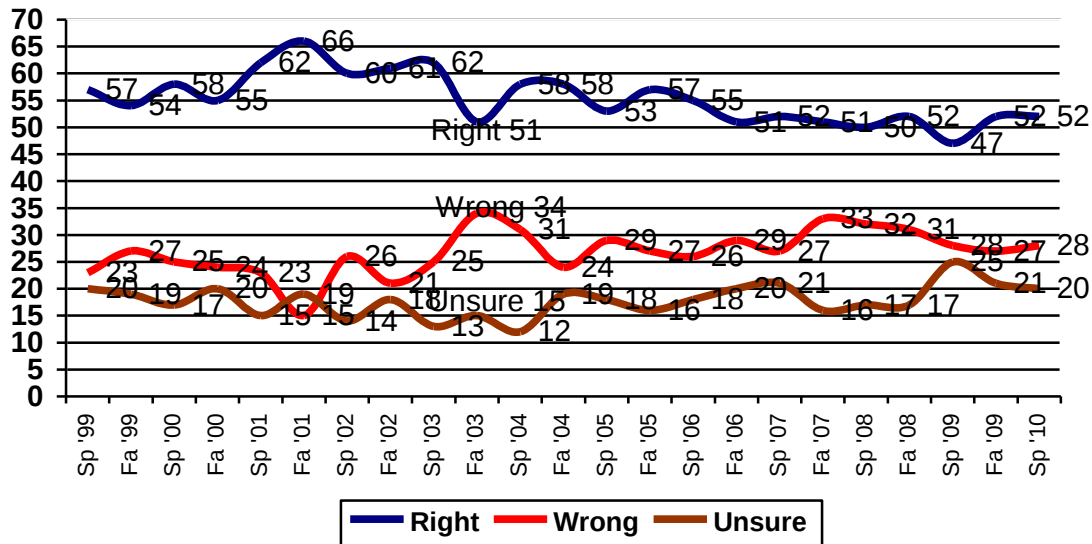
The survey included a CSLI benchmark question whose results are seen on Table 6: “Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?”

Graph 2 shows there was virtually no change in the percentages from last fall. “Since there is a strong relationship between perceptions of the county’s direction and perceptions of economic conditions, the lack of change in the latter anticipated stability in the former,” said Nataf. Among those saying ‘right direction’ 60 percent thought the local economy was “good” or “excellent,” while among those saying “wrong direction” the equivalent percentage was only 24 percent.

Table 6: Anne Arundel County - Right vs. Wrong Direction

Response	Fall 2009	Spring 2010
Right direction	52	52
Wrong direction	27	28
Unsure	21	20
Total	100	100

Graph 2: County – Right or Wrong Direction?



Quality of Life in Anne Arundel County

The spring 2010 survey asked, “How would you rate the quality of life here in Anne Arundel County: excellent, good, only fair or poor?” Over three-quarters (80 percent) said that the quality of life was excellent or good.

Table 7: Quality of Life in Anne Arundel County

Condition	Percentage
Excellent+Good	80
Excellent	17
Good	63
Fair	17
Poor	3
Don't know	0
Total	100

The survey followed up this question with another which asked, “What aspect of the quality of life in this county do you like best?” Respondents offered a wide selection ranging from “freedom” to quality of the schools to proximity to major cities. Table 7.1 summarizes the major elements mentioned. “The geographic setting of the county – with access to the Chesapeake Bay, a mix of rural and more urbanized areas, close proximity to jobs, cities and culture – combines with the availability of services and the quality of communities and schools to provide a comprehensive package appreciated by residents,” Nataf said.

Table 7.1: Quality of Life Aspect Mentioned by Respondents

Aspect mentioned	Percentage
Water, the Bay, environment	24
Location, convenience (unspecified)	14
Location: proximity to cities	3
Location: proximity to culture	2
Community, people, neighborhoods	9
Schools	9
Services – government, private	7
Entertainment	6
Safety	5
Beauty, clean, private, quiet, geography	5
Economy, close to jobs	4
Parks, outdoors	3
Rural, less developed	2
Historic	2
Transportation	2
Diversity (unspecified)	2
Low taxes	1
Total	100

County and States Issues

County Budget

As the slow economy has negatively impacted government revenues, the general dilemma often revealed by CSLI surveys in the past – how to maintain services without raising taxes – has been acutely felt both by state and local governments. The survey probed the public’s views about how to balance government budgets, starting with the question: “The county faces up to a \$90 million deficit for the 2011 fiscal year. Which of the following do you think would be the best in dealing with this deficit: cutting government services, raising taxes, or some of both?” The results are presented on Table 8.

Table 8: How to Balance County Budget for Fiscal Year 2011

Action cited	Percentage
Cut government services	27
Raise taxes	8
Some of both	55
Other response/no answer	11
Total	101

Most respondents resisted the simple choices of raising taxes or cutting services, preferring instead to blend a bit of both. While Republicans were much more likely to suggest cutting services (39 vs. 18 percent Democrats), a plurality still favored “some of both” (48 vs. 61 percent for Democrats). “These results imply that government has some capacity to raise taxes as long as it is perceived as making an honest effort to limit government services in an efficient and responsible manner,” Nataf said.

State Budget

This spring, the CSLI survey asked about a series of proposed budget cuts offered by Gov. Martin O'Malley. The public was asked whether it approved or disapproved of various actions (including budget proposals) presented by the governor.” The results are found on Table 9.

Table 9: Governor O'Malley's Proposals

Measure	Approve	Disapprove	No answer
Providing a \$3,000 tax credit for firms that hire unemployed workers.	71	24	5
Putting aside 24 percent of the Bay's oyster habitat to rebuild the oyster population	68	24	8
Decreasing the overall state budget by \$249 million compared to last year's budget	58	30	12
Avoiding any new taxes to balance the budget	56	39	5
Providing \$20 million to the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund	48	45	7
Freezing state workers' salaries for a second year	53	43	4
Ending the tuition freeze at the University of Maryland with a 3 percent increase.	42	52	5
Keeping \$647 million in the state's "rainy day fund" rather than spending it to balance the budget	41	51	9
Depending on possible but uncertain federal funds to balance the budget	31	61	7

The most popular measure was one that would potentially curb unemployment by providing a tax credit. Also receiving a majority in support were measures to create an oyster reserve, decrease the state budget compared to last year, and avoid new taxes while crafting a budget.

Less enthusiastically embraced were measures to provide funds to the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund, freeze state workers' salaries, end the tuition freeze at the University of Maryland, keep a significant rainy day fund, and depend on uncertain federal funds.

“The public seemed ready to embrace measures with a clear benefit – increasing employment, improving water quality, or fiscal constraints without specifying which services would be less funded. When specific actions meant to reduce expenditures were mentioned – raising tuition, freezing state workers' salaries – support dwindled. This simply highlights the public's desire to resist individual actions that identify how services will be curtailed, while agreeing in general that reducing expenditures is a good idea,” Nataf suggested.

As in fall 2009, the spring 2010 survey asked whether Governor O'Malley was doing a “good,” “okay” or “poor” job in balancing the state budget (see Table 10). There was little change over the six-month period, with the public remaining mixed. Fewer percentage points separated the “good job” from the “poor job” values: 25 percentage points in fall, but only 20 points in spring.

Table 10: Governor O'Malley's Job Balancing the State Budget

Measure	Fall '09	Spring '10
Good job	13	15
Okay job	42	44
Poor job	38	35
Unsure	7	5
No answer	1	1
Total	101	100

Looking only at those who felt the governor was doing a “poor” job, clearly ideological and partisan factors were influential. While a majority (58 percent in spring 2010) of conservatives felt the governor was doing a “poor” job, only 21 percent of liberals agreed – up from just 10 percent last fall. About one-fifth (22 percent) of Democrats felt the governor was doing a poor job, while a clear majority of Republicans (56 percent, down from 63 percent last fall) of Republicans concurred (see Table 11). Overall, O’Malley seemed to be perceived as doing a slightly better job this spring compared to last fall.

Table 11: Governor O’Malley’s Budget-Balancing Job by Ideology and Party - % saying Poor Job

	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Democrat	Republican	Unaffiliated
Fall 2009	55	33	10	21	63	38
Spring 2010	58	26	21	22	56	32

The Race for Governor

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they would be more likely to vote for Governor O’Malley or former Governor Bob Ehrlich if the general elections were today. Table 12 shows that Ehrlich would have a sizable advantage over the incumbent governor as a 12-point gap separated the two.

Table 12: O’Malley vs. Ehrlich for Governor in November

Candidate	Including all categories	Excluding some categories
O’Malley	35	43
Ehrlich	47	57
Someone else	3	0
Neither	5	0
Unsure, don’t know	10	0
Total	100	100

In 2006, Ehrlich obtained 106,897 votes compared to O’Malley’s 78,909 – 56.9 vs. 42 percent. To make the survey question more representative of the likely election situation, Table 12 shows a column in which those who said “someone else,” “neither” or unsure were eliminated, leaving the final percentages for the two candidates only. Such a procedure produced a result of 57 percent for Ehrlich and 43 percent for O’Malley, nearly identical to the 2006 results.

“Ehrlich would need to improve his vote percentage significantly in 2010 to avoid a replay of the 2006 results, when he lost by 6 points statewide. These results suggest that he has not yet gained enough new votes in Anne Arundel County to overcome the gaps he faced in other jurisdictions 4 years ago,” Nataf said.

Same-sex Marriage

The issue of the recognition by Maryland of same-sex marriages conducted outside the state received attention both in the Maryland General Assembly as well as by the issuance of a ruling by Attorney General Doug Gansler which stated that Maryland was constitutionally required to recognize same-sex marriages legally performed in other states. The CSLI survey asked: “Attorney General Doug Gansler recently ruled that Maryland should recognize same-sex marriages from other states. Maryland does not currently permit same-sex marriages. Do you agree or disagree with the attorney general's ruling?”

As with the slots issue, the public was sharply divided, with 48 percent supporting Gansler’s stance and 44 percent opposing it. Table 13 shows the impact of partisanship and ideology.

Table 13: Gansler’s Same-Sex Marriage Ruling and Party/Ideology

	Registered as...			Ideology			
Measure	Dem	Rep	Unaffil.	Cons.	Mod.	Liberal	Overall
Support	51	42	55	30	55	67	48
Oppose	40	51	38	63	36	27	44
Some other response	3	2	0	1	3	1	2
No answer	6	6	7	6	6	5	6
Total	100	101	100	100	100	100	100

While Conservatives were opposed to the ruling by a 2 to 1 ratio, Republicans were much less intense in their opposition. This was mostly due to the chasm between ideological conservatives and moderates on this issue. While 57 percent of Republicans identify themselves as ideological conservatives, the remaining (largely moderate) elements are sufficiently more tolerant of Gansler’s ruling to bring the overall Republican average to within 11 points of the Democratic mean.

Constitutional Convention

Every 20 years, the Maryland General Assembly is required to place a referendum on the ballot asking the public whether to hold a constitutional convention. When asked whether it favored or opposed this idea, the public response showed a deep split, with 44 percent in favor and 42 percent opposed. Table 14 shows the overall results as well as the influence of party and ideology.

Table 14: Hold Constitutional Convention and Party/Ideology

	Registered as...			Ideology			
	Dem	Rep	Unaffil.	Cons.	Mod.	Liberal	Overall
Support	48	42	45	40	42	58	44
Oppose	41	40	49	46	45	34	42
Some other response	7	13	4	10	9	7	9
No answer	4	6	2	4	5	2	5
Total	100	101	100	100	101	101	100

The results shown on Table 14 reveal no clear pattern regarding party; ideology, however, was statistically related. “Liberals, perhaps feeling that Maryland is a Democratic state with a liberal center of gravity, were much more likely than moderates or conservatives to favor a constitutional convention,” Nataf observed.

Trust and Confidence in Institutions

The survey asked respondents to assess their level of ‘trust and confidence’ in a variety of federal, state and local agencies and institutions. Table 15 (next page) shows the results. The mean value column indicates the average score for each institution or agency (and excludes those with no answer/opinion): a *lower score* shows greater trust and confidence.

Table 15: Degree of Trust and Confidence in Institutions

Institution	Great	Some	Little	No opinion/ no answer	Mean	Total
Federal						
The Supreme Court	33	46	18	3	1.79	100
The President of the United States	32	34	33	2	1.98	101
The U.S. Senate	9	39	49	2	2.37	99
The U.S. House of Representatives	8	41	48	3	2.36	100
Federal means	21	40	37	2.5	2.13	
State						
The Governor of Maryland	17	48	33	2	2.13	100
The Maryland General Assembly	11	50	31	8	2.05	100
State mean	14	49	32	5	2.09	
County						
Anne Arundel County Fire Department	80	16	2	2	1.16	100
Anne Arundel County Police	58	30	10	2	1.47	100
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	40	41	15	4	1.66	100
Our local courts	27	46	20	8	1.74	101
The County Executive	19	54	21	7	1.87	101
The County Council	13	58	21	8	1.90	100
County mean	39.5	40.8	14.8	5.2	1.6	
Other						
Wall Street financial institutions	9	33	52	6	2.29	100

Table 15 categorizes the results by level of government. Organized in this manner, it seems clear that county institutions received a lower mean score and therefore a higher “great” value than did state or federal counterparts. Nevertheless, as show in Table 15.1 the overall mean for elected offices – 2.1- was much higher than the overall mean for unelected offices and agencies – 1.6. This shows that *unelected* institutions and agencies received much more favorable treatment than did elected ones (and Wall Street financial institutions, which were included to create a base for likely unpopular but nongovernmental institutions).

**Table 15.1: Degree of Trust and Confidence in Government Institutions
(Elected vs. Unelected)**

Institution	Great	Some	Little	No opinion/ no answer	Mean	Total
Elected						
The President of the United States	32	34	33	2	1.98	101
The U.S. Senate	9	39	49	2	2.37	99
The U.S. House of Representatives	8	41	48	3	2.36	100
The Governor of Maryland	17	48	33	2	2.13	100
The Maryland General Assembly	11	50	31	8	2.05	100
The County Executive	19	54	21	7	1.87	101
The County Council	13	58	21	8	1.90	100
Overall elected mean	16	46	34	5	2.1	
Elected executives	23	45	29	4	2.0	
Elected legislatures	11	50	33	6	2.1	
Unelected						
The Supreme Court	33	46	18	3	1.8	100
Anne Arundel County Fire Department	80	16	2	2	1.2	100
Anne Arundel County Police	58	30	10	2	1.5	100
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	40	41	15	4	1.7	100
Our local courts	27	46	20	8	1.7	101
Unelected mean	48	36	13	4	1.6	

This disparity between elected and unelected institutions was large: a 32-point “great” gap; a .5 difference in the averages for each section. No elected institution has a mean score lower than any unelected institution. Elected legislatures have a higher mean score than elected executives, but that is mostly due to the relatively favorable treatment of the president. “What this suggests is a crisis in confidence in our elected officials, who may be seen as prone to partisanship and indecisiveness rather than problem solving,” Nataf suggested.

National Issues

Most Important Problem Facing National Government

As it did last fall, this spring’s survey included an open-ended question asking, “Thinking about all the problems facing the federal government, which concerns you the most?”

Table 16: Most Important Problem - Federal

Item	Fall 2009	Spring 2010
Economy/unemployment	26	31
Jobs alone (excluded from total)	n.a.	(15)
Health care	18	16
Wars/defense/terrorism	14	12
Budget/overspending	9	9
Deficit	8	12
Other financial	n.a.	4
Political divisions, process failures	n.a.	10
Other	25	6
Total	100	100

As shown on Table 16, economic issues and concerns over the federal budget predominated over others. Compared to last fall, there was a modest uptick in the percentage mentioning the economy. Similar percentages mentioned health care, foreign affairs, and budget/spending. Ten percent mentioned issues dealing with political polarization or leadership failures.

A wide variety of other concerns were also conveyed including immigration, housing, environment, crime, climate change, individual rights/freedom and socialism/big government.

President Obama – Job Approval

Since fall 2006, CSLI polls have closely tracked national presidential job approval trends as indicated by Gallup surveys.⁴ As seen on Table 17 and Graph 3, initially President Obama received relatively ample job approval both in Anne Arundel County and nationally. However, generally the Anne Arundel County public has been somewhat less supportive than the American public overall, with the local job approval score usually a few points lower.

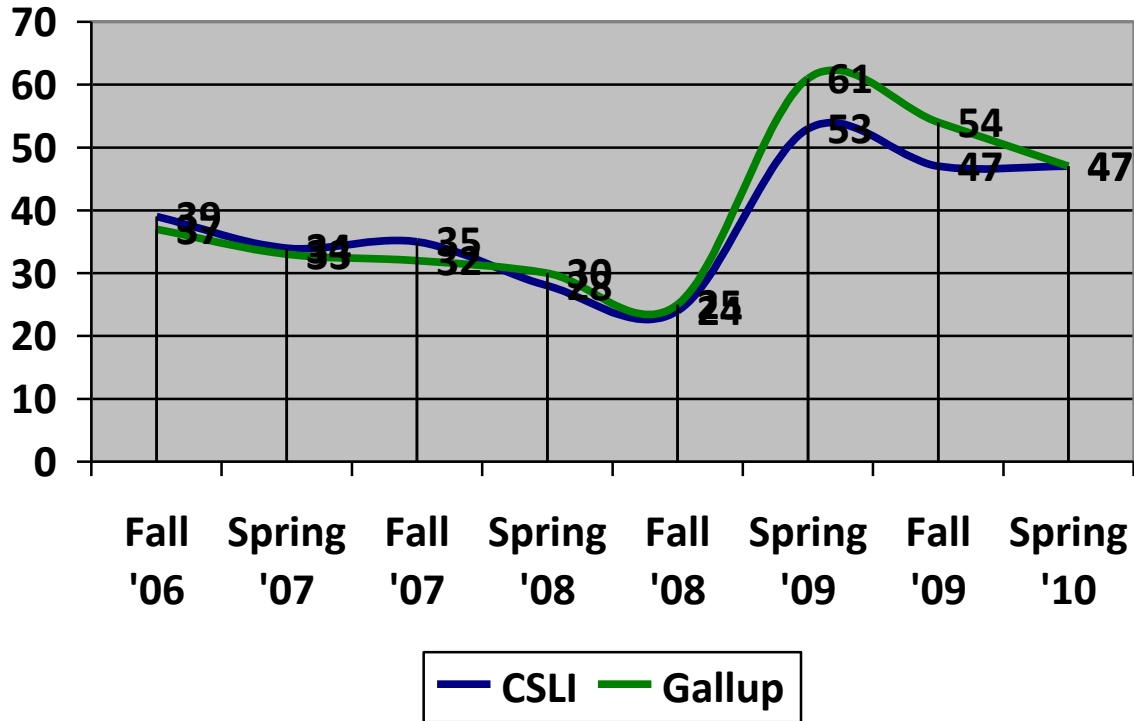
While last fall, there was a 7 point gap between what Gallup reported and the job approval score received by Obama locally (54 vs. 47 percent), that gap disappeared this spring. This change was due to the drop in national job approval, a drop not reflected in the CSLI spring survey. The latter now registers an approval score of 47 percent, with 45 percent disapproving, virtually identical to scores reported by Gallup polling for March 14, 2010 (47 percent approve, 44 percent disapprove). This implies that Obama has experienced an erosion of national support which has brought his popularity to a value similar to that found in Anne Arundel County.

Table 17: Job Approval for Presidents Bush and Obama

Issue	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010
Approve	45	37	39	34	35	28	24	53	47	47
Disapprove	48	54	55	58	57	62	69	31	42	45
Unsure / Don't know	7	8	7	7	9	10	8	16	11	8
Total	100	99	101	99	101	100	101	100	100	100

⁴ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/Gallup-Daily-Obama-Job-Approval.aspx>.

**Graph 3: Presidential Job Approval –
CSLI and Selected Gallup 2006-2010**



As seen on Table 18, Obama’s popularity among Democrats continued to decline, experiencing a 9 percent drop in approval over a year. Obama reversed a growing disapproval percentage among Republicans, and held steady among unaffiliated respondents.

Table 18: Presidential Job Approval by Partisan Affiliation

	Overall Obama			Democrats			Republicans			Unaffiliated		
	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10
Approve	53	47	47	79	72	70	25	17	24	53	54	53
Disapprove	31	42	45	11	19	24	55	72	67	30	38	42
No opinion	16	11	8	11	9	7	20	11	9	16	9	5
Total	100	100	100	101	100	101	100	100	100	99	101	100

Trust in Political Parties

Both last spring as well as this fall, the CSLI survey asked which party “do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years.” Table 19 shows that Democrats have experienced a great decline in trust, dropping 9 points during over the last year. Rather than bolstering Republicans, who were nearly identical to their starting value from spring 2009, the category “neither” – which is volunteered but not explicitly offered to respondents – has shown a dramatic increase, rising from 20 to 31 percent over the same period. “Combined with the large number citing ‘political polarization’ in our poll and the low esteem in which elected officials are held, the lack of trust in the major parties appears to be entirely consistent with our other findings,” Nataf said.

Table 19: Which Party do you Trust?

	Trust in 2009		2010
	Spring	Fall	Spring
Democrats	42	37	33
Republicans	30	28	31
Neither	20	27	31
Other / No answer	8	6	6
Total	100	98	101

Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 640 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted March 8-11, 2010 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as “Democrats.” The dataset was weighted by gender and political party to better represent the general population. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

Contact Dan Nataf for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@aacc.edu. Check the CSLI Web site for results from previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

CSLI Semiannual Survey – Spring 2010

1. What do you think is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time? (DON'T READ THE LIST! Have them *volunteer* an answer)

Problem	Percentage citing
Crime	4
Terrorism	0
Drugs (illegal drugs, use or sale)	2
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	5
Traffic congestion/transportation problems	6
Education, problems with schools	8
Taxes – too high	11
Inefficient government, wasteful spending	3
Corruption in government/politicians are bad	1
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	4
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	34
Lack of affordable housing	2
Other answer (write in)	9
Unsure/No Answer	10

2. Overall, would you say that the County is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

- (1) **Right** direction 52%
- (2) **Wrong** direction 28%
- (0) **Unsure** or don't know 20%

3.0 Next I would like to know how you would rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County, in Maryland, and in the United States generally. First how would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel COUNTY -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

- (1) Excellent 3% (2) Good 41% (3) Only Fair 41% (4) Poor 13% (0) DK, NA 2%

3.1 How about economic conditions in Maryland overall?

- (1) Excellent 2% (2) Good 29% (3) Only Fair 46% (4) Poor 21% (0) DK, NA 2%

3.2 How about economic conditions in the United States generally?

- (1) Excellent 1% (2) Good 10% (3) Only Fair 42% (4) Poor 46% (0) DK, NA 2%

3.3 Thinking about the state of Maryland, do you think economic conditions in Maryland will be better a year from now, worse a year from now, or about the same as they are today?

- (1) Better 40% (2) Same 40% (3) Worse 14% (0) DK, NA 5%

4. Thinking now about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household.

	Applies	Doesn't apply	Unsure, no answer
4.1 Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	56	41	4
4.2 Facing the possibility of unemployment	19	79	2
4.3 Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	56	41	3
4.4 Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	7	92	1
4.5 Unable to find affordable housing	15	83	2
4.6 Hard to afford cost of transportation	21	77	2
4.7 Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	44	55	1
4.8 Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	47	51	2
4.9 Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	32	66	2
4.10 Taxes are too high relative to what is received from government services such as education, roads and safety.	63	34	4

4.11 How would you rate the quality of life here in Anne Arundel County: excellent, good, only fair or poor?

(1) Excellent **17%** (2) Good **63%** (3) Only Fair **17%** (4) Poor **3%** (0) DK, NA **0%**

4.12 What aspect of the quality of life in this county do you like best?

see Table 7.1 in text

4.13 How many years have you lived in Anne Arundel County? Mean= years (use 1 even if less than 1 year) (The median value was 20 years).

Years	Percentage
0-5	14
6-10	14
11-15	12
16-20	11
21-25	9
26-30	8
31-35	6
35+	26
Total	100

5. The county faces up to a \$90 million deficit for the 2011 fiscal year. Which of the following do you think would be the best in dealing with this deficit: Cutting government services, raising taxes, or some of both?

Approach	Choice
➡ Cut government services (if chosen ask 5.1a and 5.1b)	27
5.1a Which would you cut? Insufficient responses	
5.1b Which should definitely NOT be cut? Insufficient responses	
➡ Raise taxes (if chosen ask 5.2a and 5.2b)	8
5.2a Which would you raise? Insufficient responses	
5.2b Which should definitely NOT be raised? Insufficient responses	
➡ Some of both	55
5.3 (DO NOT READ) ➡ Some other approach (write in) Insufficient responses	6
Don't know	5

6.0 Opponents to the introduction of slot machines at Arundel Mills Mall are circulating a petition to put the county council's decision to grant zoning needed for slots to referendum in November, potentially reversing the decision. Do you support or oppose this petition effort?

(1) Support 45% (2) Oppose 45% (3) Unsure 7% (0) No answer 2%

7.0 Below are several measures which Governor O'Malley has proposed to help balance the state budget for next year and meet certain priorities. As I read each measure, tell me whether you approve or disapprove.

Measure	Approve	Disapprove	No answer
7.1 Providing a \$3000 tax credit for firms that hire unemployed workers.	71	24	5
7.2 Providing \$20 million to the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund	48	45	7
7.3 Ending the tuition freeze at the University of Maryland with a 3 percent increase.	42	52	5
7.4 Keeping \$647 million in the state's "rainy day fund" rather than spending it to balance the budget	41	51	9
7.5 Decreasing the overall state budget by \$249 million compared to last year's budget	58	30	12
7.6 Freezing state workers salaries for a second year	53	43	4
7.7 Depending on possible but uncertain federal funds to balance the budget	31	61	7
7.8 Avoiding any new taxes to balance the budget	56	39	5
7.9 Putting aside 24 percent of the Bay's oyster habitat to rebuild the oyster population	68	24	8

8.0 Overall, would you say that Governor O'Malley has done a good job, an okay job, or a poor job in balancing the state budget?

(1) Good job 15% (2) Okay job 44% (3) Poor job 35% (4) Unsure 5% (0) No answer 1%

8.1 If the November 2010 election for Governor were today, for whom would you vote: Democrat Martin O'Malley or Republican Bob Ehrlich?

(1) Martin O'Malley 35% (2) Bob Ehrlich 47% (3) Someone else 3% (4) Neither 5% (5) Unsure, don't know 10%

8.2 Attorney General Doug Gansler recently ruled that Maryland should recognize same sex marriages from other states. Maryland does not currently permit same sex marriages. Do you agree or disagree with the attorney general's ruling?

(1) Agree 48% (2) Disagree 44% (3) Some other response 2% (0) No answer, don't know 6%

8.3 Every 20 years, the Maryland General Assembly is required to include on the ballot a question about holding a constitutional convention to revise the state's constitution. Would you favor or oppose holding such a convention at this time?

(1) Favor 44% (2) Oppose 42% (3) Don't know enough (volunteered) 9% (0) No answer 5%

9.0 The next questions ask you to tell us how much trust and confidence you have in various institutions found in American society. When I read the name of an institution, tell me whether you have great, some, or little trust and confidence that it will do its job well.

Institution	Great	Some	Little	No opinion/ no answer
9.1 The President of the United States	32	34	33	2
9.2 The US Senate	9	39	49	2
9.3 The US House of Representatives	8	41	48	3
9.4 The Supreme Court	33	46	18	3
9.5 The Governor of Maryland	17	48	33	2
9.6 The Maryland General Assembly	11	50	31	8
9.7 The County Executive	19	54	21	7
9.8 The County Council	13	58	21	8
9.9 Our local courts	27	46	20	8
9.10 Anne Arundel County Public Schools	40	41	15	4
9.11 Anne Arundel County Police	58	30	10	2
9.12 Anne Arundel County Fire Department	80	16	2	2
9.13 Wall St. financial institutions	9	33	52	6

10. Thinking about the moves taken by the federal government in response to the economic crisis, do you feel very confident, somewhat confident, or not very confident that these measures will be effective?

(1) Very confident 7% (2) Somewhat confident 43% (3) not very confident 49%
(4) Unsure 2% (0) No answer 0%

11. Thinking about all the problems facing the federal government, which concerns you the most?

_____see Table 16 in text_____

12. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

(1) Approve 47% (2) Disapprove 45% (0) Don't know, unsure 8%

13. Overall, which party, the (Democrats) or the (Republicans), do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?

(1) Democrats 33% (2) Republicans 31%
(3) Neither (volunteered) 31% (4) Other (volunteered) 1% (0) No answer 5%

The last few questions help us better understand our respondents. Please be assured that your responses are confidential and anonymous.

14. With which political party, if any, are you registered? (weighted values)

(1) Democratic 41%	4) None (NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE) 9%
(2) Republican 36%	(5) Other (e.g., Green Party) 0%
(3) Independent or undeclared 14%	(0) No Answer (excluded as missing values)

15. Overall, which of the following best describes your political beliefs: Conservative, Moderate or Liberal?

(1) Conservative 34% (2) Moderate 43% (3) Liberal 17% (0) Other, No Answer 6%

16. What is your age? 18-30=11%; 31-40=11%; 41-50=23%; 51-60=23%; 61-65=11%; 66-75=14%; 76+=7%

17. I am going to read some categories relating to education. Please stop me when I reach the category in which the highest level of your formal education falls.

(1) less than a high school diploma 2%	(5) Completed college with a bachelor's degree 21%
(2) a high school diploma 14%	(6) post graduate work 23%
(3) some college but less than a 2 year degree 24%	(7) Other vocational or technical training 2%
(4) Completed at least a 2 year associate college degree but without a bachelor's degree 13%	(0) No Answer 1%

18. I am going to read some categories relating to income. Please stop me when I reach the category in which your household income falls.

- (1) Less than \$30,000 **9%** (5) 100,001-\$150,000 **19%**
 (2) \$30,000 to \$50,000 **13%** (6) Over \$150,000 **12%**
 (3) \$50,001 to \$75,000 **16%** (0) No answer **17%**
 (4) \$75,001-\$100,000 **15%**

19. Stop me when I reach the employment category that best describes your situation. If you have retired and re-entered the workforce then indicate retired and as well as your current employment category.

Retired	29
Self employed	12
Employed full time for a company in the private sector	22
Employed full time for government in a non-defense related activity such as education, public works or public safety	11
Employed full time for government in a defense related activity	9
Employed in a private non-profit organization	2
Employed part time	6
Student	2
Unemployed and seeking a job	3
Unemployed and not seeking a job	3
No answer	2

20. Regarding race, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) White **80%**
 (2) Black or African American **10%**
 (3) Hispanic or Latino **2%** (4) Asian **1%** (5) Other **3%** (0) No answer **4%**

21. Regarding religion, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) None **7%**
 (2) Non-practicing **7%**
 (3) Evangelical or born again Christian (possibly Baptist, Pentecostal) **18%**
 (4) Catholic **25%**
 (5) Jewish **1%**
 (6) Protestant (possibly Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopalian) **21%**
 (7) Some other Christian **7%**
 (8) A 'spiritual person' not associated with an organized religion **4%**
 (9) Other **5%**
 (0) No Answer **4%**

22. What is your current marital status?

- (1) Single 16%
- (2) Married 67%
- (3) Separated/divorced 9%
- (4) Widowed 7%
- (5) Other 1% (ask 'which?' _____)
- (0) No answer 1%

23. I have one last request: In an attempt to provide students with more opportunities to survey the public, the Center is asking respondents if they would like to be contacted no more than once a month by email to participate in short surveys taking no more than a couple of minutes to complete. Can we count on your help?

- (1) Yes 33% (2) No 67%

23.1 IF YES: What email address shall we use to contact you?

(CLEAR SPELLING/HANDWRITING PLEASE!)

SAY: That concludes our survey, thanks for participating.

Once the respondent hangs up, make sure to enter GENDER and ZIP CODE

24. Gender of respondent to whom you were speaking: (1) Male 49% (2) Female 51%
(weighted)

25. Zip code

20161	.2
20711	1.2
20724	1.1
20733	.5
20751	.5
20755	.9
20758	.3
20764	.4
20776	.5
20778	.5
20779	.2
21012	4.6
21027	.2
21032	1.6
21035	2.0
21037	3.5
21054	1.2
21056	.1
21060	3.8
21061	7.4
21076	1.3
21090	2.7
21097	.1
21106	.1
21108	3.0
21113	5.1
21114	4.7
21122	15.9
21140	1.5
21144	4.9
21146	8.5
21226	.5
21401	6.8
21402	1.8
21403	7.2
21405	.1
21409	4.9
21410	.1
Total	100.0